

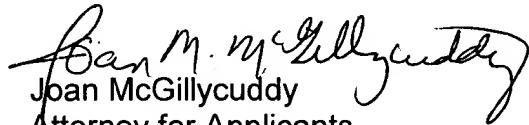
REMARKS

Claims 1 through 9 have been amended. The amendments requested in this Preliminary Amendment are not narrowing amendments and/or are made for reasons of form and/or for other purposes other than for reasons of patentability.

Attached to this Preliminary Amendment is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and a marked up version of the changes to the claims by the current amendment.

Early consideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested.
Applicants request that the above amendments be entered.

Respectfully submitted,


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Enclosure: Abstract (1 sheet)

MARKED UP VERSION OF THE SPECIFICATION

On page 1, line 2, immediately after the heading, the following has been inserted:

--This application is the national phase of International Application No.
PCT/EPO0/02473, with an international filing date of March 17,2001, designating
the United States of America. This application also claims priority of European
Patent Application No. 99302127.8, filed March 18, 1999.--;

On page 1 , line 5 , before “This invention” the following has been inserted: --

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION--;

On page 4, line 3, before “The coating composition according to the present invention” the following has been inserted:

--SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--;

On page 4 line 11, before “The binder is most preferably” the following has been inserted:

--DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION--.

MARKED UP VERSION OF THE CLAIMS

Claims

1. A composition for coating a metal substrate which is intended to be fabricated and overcoated, said composition comprising a silica or silicate binder, [characterized in that] wherein the binder comprises an aqueous silica sol or alkali metal silicate having a $\text{SiO}_2/\text{M}_2\text{O}$ mole ratio of at least 6:1, where M represents total alkali metal and ammonium ions, and wherein the silica or silicate particles have an average size equal to or smaller than 10 nm.
2. The [A] coating composition according to claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the binder is a silica sol of $\text{SiO}_2/\text{M}_2\text{O}$ mole ratio at least 25:1.
3. The [A] coating composition according to claim 1 [or claim 2, [characterized in that] wherein the binder comprises an aqueous solution of an alkali metal or ammonium silicate stabilized by a silicate substituted by at least one anionic group of lower pKa than silicic acid, having a pH of 7 to 10.5 prepared by lowering the pH of a solution of silicate and silicate by ion exchange.
4. The [A] coating composition according to [any of] claims 1 [to 3, characterized in that] wherein the coating composition further comprises zinc powder and/or a zinc alloy.
5. The [A] coating composition according to [any of] claims 1 to [4, characterized in that] wherein the silica particles have an average size in the range 3 nm to 10 nm.
6. The [A] coating composition according to [any of] claims 1 [to 5, characterized in that] wherein the binder further comprises a silane coupling agent.

7. The [A] coating composition according to [any of] claims 1 [to 6, characterized in that] wherein the binder further comprises an organic resin.
8. The [A] coating composition according to [any of] claims 1 [to 7, characterized in that] wherein it is a water-based shop primer.
9. A Water-based shop primer for the coating of steel substrates which are intended to be fabricated and overcoated, said composition having a solid content of 20 - 40 % by volume, comprising:
 - an aqueous silica sol or alkali metal silicate binder having a $\text{SiO}_2/\text{M}_2\text{O}$ mole ratio of at least 6:1, where M represents total alkali metal and ammonium ions, and wherein the silica or silicate particles have an average size equal to or smaller than 10 nm,
 - 10 - 90 % by volume of the coating on a dry film basis of zinc powder and/or a zinc alloy having a mean particle size in the range 2 to 12 μm ,
 - 0 - 35 % by weight, based on silica or silicate, of an organic resin,
 - 0 - 30 % by weight, based on silica or silicate, of a silane coupling agent,
 - optionally non-zinc pigment(s) having a mean particle size below 3 μm , and
 - optionally a pot-life extender.